"FATHER OF WISCONSIN"
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DE LANGLADE BUILT A LARGE TRADING POST AND HOME AT WHAT IS NOW THE RIVER END OF DOTY STREET.
DE LANGLADE TRADING POST
CHARLES DE LANGLADES RED MILITARY COAT CAN BE SEEN AT THE NEVILLE PUBLIC MUSEUM.
THE INDIANS CALLED HIM "AUKEWINGEKETAUSO" WHICH MEANT EITHER "MILITARY CONQUEROR" OR "BRAVEST OF THE BRAVE."
HAROLD ELDE

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Green Bay's First Settler

DeLanglade, 'Father of Wisconsin'

By JACK RUDOLPH
Press-Gazette Staff Writer

The Indians called him "Aukewingeketauso" — "Military Conqueror" or "Bravest of the Brave." To the English and American pioneers whose frontier settlements he harried for nearly 50 years he was a regegade butcher who reveled in the scalps of murdered women and children.

As the state's first permanent white settler he is also called the "Father of Wisconsin." His real name was Charles Michel DeLanglade.

He earned his bloody reputation during the long struggle between France and England for the possession of North America and maintained it through the Revolution. He had practically cut his teeth on a tomahawk and was almost constantly on the warpath for 20 years. As is usually the case he was not as bad as he was painted, but he was no rose, either.

Charles DeLanglade was born at Michilimachinac in May, 1729, the son of Augustin DeLanglade and an Ottawa princess whose brother was the principal war chief of his people. DeLanglade was not a family name — Augustin was the first to use it.

Good Luck Mascot

When he was 10 he was taken on an Indian raid by his uncle and the expedition was so successful he went along regularly thereafter, first as a good luck mascot and later as a leader of war parties in his own right.

DeLanglade rocketed to fame in 1752 with a surprise swoop on the Miami (Ohio) River outpost of Pickawillany, an action that triggered the final phase of the Hundred Year's War in America. From then until 1761 he ranged the frontier from Virginia to Quebec, spreading death, destruction and terror among the British settlements.

In 1755 he achieved his greatest military success as architect of Braddock's Defeat, which he persuaded the discouraged French commandant of Ft. Duquaine to stage, helped plan the ambush and fought brilliantly in it. Two years later his reputation was tarnished because he failed to control his Indian followers, who broke loose in the massacre at Ft. William Henry. It gave him a black eye in the opinion of both the English and French.

Surrendered Mackinac

Publicly reprimanded, he was later given the post of commandant at Mackinac, which he formally surrendered to the British in 1761. Upon taking the oath of allegiance to the British crown he was permitted to remain there.

DeLanglade warned the commandant of Pontiac's uprising but was ignored. He was present when the Indians over-ran Mackinac in June, 1763, an attack he was powerless to stop, and he was later obsolved from complicity in the disaster.

Later that year he obtained permission to move his family to LaBaye. On arrival here he built a large trading post and home at what is now the river end of Doty Street and "settled down" to the life of a fur trader. He also functioned as British Indian agent and commander of local militia.

Great Prestige

So great was his prestige among the Indians that his mere presence served to keep them in line, and the settlement grew slowly and peacefully. In fact, only a few months before his death a rumor that he was coming down the Mississippi threw the Spaniards at New Orleans into a panic.

When the Revolution began De Langlade, now crowding 60, unsheathed his war hatchet and offered his services to England. He appeared with a large war party at the headquarters of Gen. John Burgoyne just before the latter took off on his ill-fated Saratoga campaign but Gentleman Johnny politely turned him down.

It was his last fling. He had taken part in 99 battles and skirmishes and in his old age he used to grouse good naturedly that he'd like to get into just one more to make it an even 100.

Beautiful Wife

DeLanglade's wife was a strikingly beautiful woman named Charlotte Bourassa, whom he married at Mackinac in 1754. Fifteen years his junior, she outlived him by 18 years.

Their daughter Domitelle married Pierre Grignon, a union that founded the Grignon dynasty in Wisconsin. DeLanglade also had a son Charles Jr. by a previous marriage, who served with distinction in the British army in the War of 1812.

DeLanglade was a powerful, stocky man, slightly under six feet tall with very broad shoulders and a round, expressive face. Piercing black eyes peered from beneath bushy eyebrows.

Impressive Figure

He became partly bald in middle age and his once jet black hair turned white in his last years. Dressed in the scarlet British uniform of a commander of militia — now preserved in the Neville Public Museum — he was an impressive figure.

He is described as a mild and patient man who could not, however, brook an insult. An outstanding leader, he inspired respect and confidence in white men as well as Indians. Every record testifies to his rigid honesty as well as courage in battle.

Early in March — some say January — 1800, he contracted a severe cold, one of the few illnesses in his long and arduous life. Within two weeks he was dead at the age of 71.

Grave Long Lost

Charles DeLanglade was buried in the old LaBaye cemetery, now covered by the Washington - Adams - Mason Streets intersection, but all trace of his grave was eventually lost. It is likely, although there is no certainty, that his unidentified remains were transferred eventually to Allouez cemetery and dumped into a common trench.

His sturdily built home and trading post, on the present site of the Wisconsin Public Service Corporation bus garage on South Washington Street, remained a Green Bay landmark for nearly a century. It was acquired by John Penn Arndt, who lived there until his death during the Civil War, finally being torn down and replaced by a fine brick residence for Dr. H. O. Crane in 1864.